

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 191036Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5755

INFO USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 16478

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, UR

SUBJECT: FRG-USSR RELATIONS--PROGRESS PROBLEMATICAL

1. AN OCTOBER 17 WEST GERMAN RADIO INTERVIEW OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO BONN, FALIN, HAS CAUSED A FLURRY OF PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT RESULTS CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT MAY OBTAIN DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW. IN THE INTERVIEW, FALIN SAID THAT HE WAS "SURE THAT IF WE APPROACH IT FRANKLY WE WILL MOVE FORWARD ON THIS QUESTION" OF BERLIN. THIS HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY THE PRESS AS A SIGN OF SOVIET READINESS TO BE FORTHCOMING ON BERLIN.

2. LOCAL SOVIET EMBASSY POL COUNSELOR, HOWEVER, TOLD EMBOFF OCT 18 THAT PROGRESS WAS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. HE INDICATED THAT FALIN HAD BEEN MORE OR LESS PUT ON THE SPOT BY THE INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION, AND THAT WHATEVER FALIN SAID -- POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE -- WAS BOUND TO BE BLOWN OUT OF PERSPECTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE UPCOMING SCHMIDT-BREZHNEV MEETINGS.

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SOVIET REP SAID HE WAS NOT AT ALL SURE THAT THERE

WOULD BE ANY SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT ON BERLIN ISSUES
DURING SCHMIDT VISIT.

3. THIS DOWNBEAT ASSESSMENT WAS ECHOED BY FRG FONOFF
SOVIET SECTION CHIEF IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH
EMBOFF. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAD TAKEN TOUGH STANDS
ON THE BERLIN ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE VARIOUS BILATERAL
NEGOTIATIONS NOW GOING ON. EVEN AN AGREEMENT ON
TOURISM, WHICH HAD BEEN COMPLETED TO ALL INTENTS AND
PURPOSES, FELL THROUGH IN THE LAST FEW DAYS OVER THE
SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO ALLOW AN FRG TRAVEL OFFICE IN
MOSCOW TO REPRESENT WEST BERLIN'S CITY TRAVEL
BUREAU.

4. COMMENT: AS IN THE PAST, BOTH THE FRG AND THE
SOVIETS SEEM TO BE REACTING ALMOST EMOTIONALLY ON
BERLIN PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY
USING THESE AS POTENTIAL BARGAINING CHIPS FOR
SUBSEQUENT TALKS WITH SCHMIDT. THE ONE THING THE
SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE UNDERESTIMATING, HOWEVER, IS
THE DOMESTIC HEAT THAT BERLIN ISSUES CAN CREATE AND
ARE ALREADY CREATING IN THE FRG. UNLESS THE SOVIETS
BACK AWAY FROM THEIR PRESENT INFLEXIBILITY, THEY MAY
FIND SCHMIDT, WHO APPARENTLY WANTS PROGRESS IN
BILATERAL RELATIONS, UNABLE TO MOVE VERY FAR IN THEIR
DIRECTION.
HILLENBRAND

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